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status and elegance, did not reckon the strength of his scientific and professional ambition . Similarly Dorothea saw Casaubon only as the fulfilment of her idealistic aspirations and not as a husband . Dorothea and Rosamond confused their wishes with reality . They were too much blinded by the intensity of their egos to see the facts of life that most of the people around them could see .

The failure of the leading characters in *Middlemarch* is full of significance and meaning . Because Lydgate's work was so important and so much of his character was committed to and defined by his professional ambition, the collapse of his career means total wreck for him . "At the end he is a fashionable physician with no interest in discovery , content only to maintain a prosperous practice . We see how it has lowered his spirit , slackened his scruples, embittered his tongue."(14) Dorothea's shattered aspirations left her disappointed, disheartened and depressed. Bulstrode, the town philanthropist , the promoter of reform for godly purposes , whose position rests upon fraud - he too shared in the aspirations , the desire for change, yet he was finally discovered to be a wicked , double dealer in his conscience , and left to fester his own rottenness of heart .

(14) David Cecil, *Early Victorian Novelists*, (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1966), p. 234 .

regardless of the result , “was the thing that gives direction to her character .” (13) To such a selfish pretentious woman a good house - keeping consisted simply in ordering the best of everything .

Now Lydgate came to think of himself as the sufferer whose life has been injured by others , including his wife . He had meant to devote himself for the benefit of mankind , yet owing to unseen and unfriendly circumstances which were thrust into his life , his noble purpose was finally thwarted and his dreams shattered .

In *Middlemarch* , George Eliot illustrated the account of the lives of two noble - minded characters , Dorothea Brooke and Tertius Lydgate . Their idealism was strangled and then crushed by associations with mean - spirited or materialistic personalities . Both of them experienced bitter failure and total disillusionment in their aspirations and ideals. Lydgate married Rosamond Vincy hoping to have a sympathetic and loving wife , yet he was soon to discover in her only a deadly egoism of the spoilt child . Dorothea’s destiny is the result , not just of the narrowness of her provincial world , but also of her ardent , idealistic nature . Lydgate fails , not just because of cruel circumstances , but also because of intrinsic flaw . He was unable to put a limit to the extravagant demands of his wife . He did not mind the heavy debt that he incurred just to please a greedy and pretentious wife . The arrival of Dr. Lygate , who was a symbol of a professional as well as a social advance to *Middlemarch* aroused the jealousy and hostility of the local doctors . He was a noble idealist trying to straighten the crooked practicality of age . Thus , in hoping to advance both medical research and practice in a provincial town , Lydgate got himself entangled with the local conservative forces which succeeded in bringing his final defeat .

Most of the major characters came to grief and disappointment because they were too preoccupied with their aspirations to know themselves and the decisive social forces which caused their downfall . This ignorance of self leads to misestimation of the other people . Rosamond , unable to see in Lydgate anything but a fine marriage that would provide her with social

(13) Jerome Thale, *The Novels of George Eliot*, (New York : Columbia University Press, 1967) p. 111 .

In addition Dr. Lydgate was so much interested in extending the boundaries of scientific knowledge that he became scornful of the worldly prizes his profession might enable him to gain . Yet it is to be noted how deeply he got entangled with Bulstrode , the ignominious and hypocrite banker , for the sake of getting financial aid to get his medical ideals realized :

His attachment to Bulstrode is based on the belief that Bulstrode seems to have good ideas about hospitals , and he spends large sums on useful public objects. He might help me a good deal in carrying out my medical ideas . (10)

For this reason Dr. Lydgate did not heed the criticism of the people of Middlemarch that in associating with Bulstrode , the wicked and sanctimonious merchant , he had compromised his noble purposes of medical accomplishment for ill gotten money . He did not like to frustrate his own best purposes by getting on bad terms with Bulstrode ; he did not like voting against Farebrother, and helping to deprive him of function and salary . He was favouring Bulstrode for the sake of making himself important in this world . "What he really cared for was a medium for his work, a vehicle for his ideas ." (11) People started to whisper . And for the first time Lydgate was feeling the hampering pressure of small social conditions, and their frustrating complexity .

Dr. Lydgate's stultifying marriage to a shallow, pleasure - loving woman, "who becomes a clog on all his fine schemes , brings him to the verge of ruin , and makes the unselfish career on which he had pinned his hopes a failure ." (12) Unfortunately his marriage to Rosamond Vincy , a stubborn proud , tenacious and pretentious woman , is one of the factors that almost brought him to a complete ruin . Selfish aspirations motivate Rosamond to accept Lydgate . She thought that Dr. Lydgate was a perfect gentleman and for this reason she adamantly refused to give up her only prospect of happiness and social relation . She could not love anyone who was not a real gentleman. She decided to marry this young doctor because she thought that Lydgate and his family would be financially and socially a glory to her . Lydgate's continuous concessions to Rosamond were often a result of his inability to resist her selfish desires . Her ambition to have everything

10) Ibid., p. 205 .

11) Ibid., p.210 .

12) Ernest A. Baker, *The History of the English Novel*, (New York : Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1960) Vol . III. pp. 256 - 257 .

ctation for success, confidence in his own powers and integrity of purpose :

'I will not profess bravery , 'said Lydgate , 'but I acknowledge a good deal of pleasure in fighting , and I should not care for my profession , if I did not believe that better methods, were to be found and enforced there as well as everywhere else .' (6)

Dr. Lydgate was painfully aware of the backwardness under which medical treatment labours in the provincial districts . He has devoted himself to the object of hospital improvement . He was concerned with the possibility that he might work out the proof of an anatomical conception and make a link in the chain of medical discovery . He decided to be a good Middlemarch doctor , and by that very means keep himself in the track of far - reaching investigation . He was ambitious above all to contribute towards enlarging the scientific knowledge , the basis of his profession . With a generous resolution he wanted his medical researches to be at the disposal of all mankind :

He was an ardent fellow , but at present his ardour was absorbed in love of his work and in the ambition of making his life recognized as a factor in the better life of mankind - like other heroes of science who had nothing but an obscure country practice to begin with . (7)

Dr. Lydgate was born in London , reared in London , and medically educated in that large city , yet he refused to practice his profession there because :

That was why I determined not to try anything in London , for a good many years at least . I did not like what I saw when I was studying there - so much empty bigwiggism , and obstructive trickery - in the country people have less pretention to knowledge. (8)

Dr. Lydgate was a good - hearted man . He was bent on alleviating the suffering of the poor people rather than the rich . His case for them was as a result of his compassion for them . He had a natural yearning to help the poor and solve their problems :

But I don't really like attending such people so well as the poor. The cases are more monotonous , and one has to go through more fuss and listen more deferentially to nonsense . (9)

(6) Ibid., p. 153 .

(7) Ibid., p. 195 .

(8) Ibid., p. 204 .

(9) Ibid., p. 327 .

dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by mere illusion and false hopes which seemed to lead her nowhere. She was humiliated to find herself a mere victim of futile dreams . It was too late for her to find out the futility of her husband's efforts to be a great literary figure, a giant author ; instead she discovered a dried - up pedant , a faded scholar , and an atrophied husband . She came to realize her fruitless attempts to be his helpmaker in all his kind deeds :

She longed for objects which would be directly beneficent like the sunshine and the rain , but now it appeared that she was to live more and more in a virtual tomb , where there was the apparatus of a ghastly labour producing what would never see the light. (2)

After the death of Mr. Casaubon, Dorothea resolved not to marry again, but, “. . . to take a great deal of land . and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well. I should know everyone of the people and be their friend . ” (3) Dorothea was too good and cooperative to abandon her distressed friend Dr. Lydgate, “I cannot be indifferent to the troubles of a man who advised me in my troubles , and attended me in my illness . ” (4) Again Dorothea was willing to come to the help of Dr. Lydgate and defend him against his foes who were using everything to get him defamed and driven out of Middlemarch, “They would know that I could have no other motive than truth and justice . I would take any pains to clear you . I have very little to do. There is nothing better that I can do in the world . ” (5) It is obvious that cruel circumstances and bad luck united in crushing the aspirations and good intentions of such a good woman .

The other pathetic story , I would like to discuss is that of Dr. Lydgate whose human ambitions withered under the pressure of provincial narrowness. Dr. Lydgate tried to combine the reform of medical practice to basic research for the benefit of the Middlemarchers . Yet he was pushed to a tragic end when he was trapped into a stultifying union with Rosamond Vincy , the monster of egoism .

What was the background of this brilliant man ? He was young , poor very ambitious , very gifted , talented , a fearless man who was fully expe-

(2) George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, (London: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 1970), p.516.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 594 .

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 790 .

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 820 .

guide who would take her along the grandest path . ” (1)

Dorothea's wish was to find in Mr. Casaubon , 'the faded scholar' , a champion and a loving husband who would assure her of his deepest love and would open the gate for new experiences unknown to her . She wished to have a husband who was above her in judgment and in all branches of knowledge , a husband who would be an earthy guardian of her welfare. To her the delightful marriage must be that where a husband is a sort of a scholar who is willing to teach you even Hebrew , if you wished. She thought of the Reverend Edward Casaubon , noted in the country as a man of profound learning , understood for many years to be engaged on a great work concerning religious history ; also a man of wealth enough to give lustre to his piety. His very name carried an impression hardly to be measured without a precise chronology of scholarship . Even his manners , she thought , were very dignified . She was captivated by the accepted belief that Casaubon was a living and great religious man whose work would reconcile complete knowledge with devoted piety ; here was a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint . The idea of becoming a wife to such a great man touched her all being with a sort of reverential gratitude . She was very enthusiastic to learn everything in order to help him the better in his great work, '*A Key To All Mythologies*'. There would be nothing trivial about their lives . Everyday events with them would mean the greatest things . It would be like marrying Pascal. She should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it. Then she would get rich experience that would enable her to know what to do when she is older-she should see how to lead a grand life in the coming years . Even she hopes to be able to get the people well housed in Lowick ! She thought of her marriage to Mr. Casaubon as an opportunity that would open for her a fuller life of facts and knowledge , that she would enter on a higher grade of initiation . She thought that she would be allowed to live continually in the light of a mind that she had to highly reverence . It was entirely out of devotion to her future husband that Dorothea wished to learn Latin and Greek in order to help him achieve the publication of his book .

But what a pity ! Unseen and cruel circumstances prevented Dorothea from realizing her aspiration and dreams. Very shortly after her **marriage** she began to feel that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had

(1) George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, (London: Hazell Watson and Viney Ltd., 1970), p.51.

MOTIVATIONS IN MIDDLEMARCH

A. M. Al- Samarrai , M. A.

In *Middlemarch* , George Eliot gave a revealing picture of sordid and ugly things. She gave the reader a masterly and, indeed, a great psychological analysis of human nature and motive. She presented her individuals enmeshed in their cruel struggle in an unjust society, trying to achieve their aspirations and realize their noble aims. She dramatized man's various attempts, often fumbling and frustrated, to shape his destiny in a world deeply swayed by the random tides of chance and contingency . The accumulation and interaction of countless choices, of insignificant actions of minute and subtle pressures, of invincible motives and unforeseen consequences - all these create a field of decisive factors which act, now with and now against, the individual will. The psychological and spiritual development of her protagonists reveals a process of painful and bitter struggle to break free from the prison of egoism and grudge into a life of sympathy with their fellow men. On the other hand , she gave acute studies of spiritual degeneration and petrification of the corrupted soul as it creates its own private hell .

George Eliot profuse and superb ability enabled her to analyse and set dramatically into motion cruel forces and pressures which we feel to be the sinew and bloodstream of any reasonably sophisticated society . In such a society one can find various groupings and associations, its conflicting interests and their influence they exercise .

I have meant this paper to deal with the aspirations of the leading characters of the book, and as such I will deal with Dorothea Brooke , Dr. Lydgate, and to a lesser degree with theory , Bulstrode and Rosamond .

At the heart of the novel there is the pathetic story of Dorothea and Dr. Lydgate, a combined study in defeated aspirations and idealism . Dorothea is the innocent idealist, anxious to do a great deal of good in a world which cramps and confines her ardour so that she dwindles into a futile marriage with the pedantic and sterile Casaubon . She is ardent , romantic , innocent , ignorant of her self and the world in which she lives, normally and literally she is myopic . Her acceptance of Mr. Casaubon as a husband is really motivated by her desire that "The union which attracted her was one that would deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance , and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a